(c) if so, the action that have been taken by the Ministry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) In September, 2004, Shri Chanchal Singh, Ex-Chief Ship Wright Artificer (SWA) wrote a letter stating that news reports published in some newspapers/magazines regarding sinking of INS, Khukri were partially incorrect which needed to be corrected. The essence of his letter was that when INS, Khukri sank due to torpedo hit by an enemy submarine, INS Kirpan (which was deployed with INS, Khukri at that time) left the scene, without caring for the survivors of INS, Khukri. Shri Chanchal Singh saved many of the drowning sailors of INS, Khukri, for which he should have been given a Gallantry award.

The Gallantry and other awards are given on merit and cannot be claimed as a matter of right. Regarding the incident of sinking of INS, Khukri, deeds of all the Naval personnel on board were duly evaluated by the Naval authorities. Shri Chanchal Singh's dedication to duty and courage on board INS, Khukri was also considered and he was given a one time cash award of Rs. 50,000. He was, however, not found deserving for a Gallantry award.

Some Members of Parliament had also written to the Government in this regard and their letters have also been replied to.

Pull out of troops from Siachen

3028. SHRIMATI SUKHBUNS KAUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government, following the recent visit of Prime Minister to Siachen, have decided to pull out troops from Siachen Glacier to convert into a "mountain of peace"; and

(b) if so, what assurance or guarantee has been secured to ensure that Pakistan would ensure *status-quo* would not intrude into and reoccupy the Siachen heights?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) A ceasefire has been in force on Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in Siachen area since the midnight of 25th November, 2003. There is no proposal at present to pull out troops from Siachen Glacier.